

## STORIES of New Jersey

losophers, sociologists and curiosity seekers came from far and wide. Charles A. Dana, the Rev. George Ripley, and other members of the Brook Farm Colony were visitors. All went away impressed with the apparent success and happiness of the members.

Soon there was enough surplus to sell to outsiders. The Association purchased an interest in a steamboat plying between Red Bank and New York and another between Keyport and New York.

All fruits, vegetables, flour and other products sent to market were stamped N. A. P. This trademark of the North American Phalanx was recognized as representing high quality. The first packaged and trademarked cereals ever sold in this country came from the Phalanx mills.

It is probable that the success of the Phalanx was due to the wise administration of the three men at the head of the organization. Charles Sears, a businessman, was president for a time and always took a leading part in its affairs. John Bucklin, his brother-in-law, was head of the agricultural group. Nathan French was head of the manufacturing group.

In spite of the flourishing condition of affairs and the apparent satisfaction of the members there was an undercurrent of disagreement. Little by little the desire for gain began to undermine the smooth surface of the colony. As news of returning prosperity came from the outside world, a teacher who was paid 9 cents an hour began to wonder if it would not be better to go where he would receive \$5 for two hours' work. There was some question as to whether higher pay and independence were not preferable to the communal life. Then, following a visit by a missionary, religious sectarianism began to cause some dissension in contrast to the previous mutual tolerance. In 1854 there was a fire that destroyed the flour mill, sawmill, smithy and machinery. The loss involved was about \$9,000--not enough to ruin the Association. At a conference the heads held after the fire, no decision could be reached as to the best location on which to rebuild the mills. There were some who advocated that they be built nearer to shipping points. A number of these withdrew their capital and some of them formed a new association at Perth Amboy headed by George B. Arnold, which they called the Raritan Bay Union. They thought they could make more money there. They did not.

A vote was then held on the desirability of continuing and the majority voted in favor of dissolution. The fire, therefore, was more the excuse than the reason for abandoning the experiment.

In April 1855 the Phalanx property was broken up into parcels and sold at auction. The non-resident stockholders got 100 percent of their investment back. The resident stockholders received about 60 percent. The Phalanx was dead, but the members were almost unanimous in regarding this period as the happiest of their lives. A number of them remained in Monmouth County, where they became substantial members of the community.

John Bucklin purchased the phalanstery with the purpose of continuing the canning industry. Down through the years the Bucklin family has occupied the huge building, moving into closer quarters as decrepit sections were torn down. The Bucklin factory in the village of Phalanx, where tomatoes and other vegetables are canned, is on the site of the Association's property.